

# PLEASANT HOURS

PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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## Easter Day.

The spring awakes at Easter-tide,  
Ah! what could be more meet?  
New life, new life on ev'ry side,  
And perfumed breezes sweet!

And balmy skies look sweetly down  
In azure colour fair,  
So near to heaven they cannot frown  
When Easter draweth near.

The Christ is risen, h, O earth, be glad;  
Ye angels catch the strain,  
Ye ransom'd ones with heart and voice  
Ring out the glad refrain!

## THE "MAKING OF A MAN."

"CAPTAIN," said a small boy, as he entered the Fourth Street station-house, Williamsburg, one evening, "can you send a policeman to guard some property to-night?"

Captain Woglom looked down at the boy and saw that his eyes were filled with tears. He asked the boy why he made such a request.

"Because," said he, beginning with a sob, "I was leaning against a store window in Broadway, and I must have pushed too hard, for I broke the glass. The store door was locked, and I could not find the owner, so I came to the station-house as fast as I could for fear thieves would go in. If I give you thirty-five cents, captain, toward paying for the glass, will you please let me go home till to-morrow? It's all the money I've got, and I live too far away to go home and come back again to-night. I'll bring the rest down to-morrow, but please put someone to watch the place."

"You're a noble little fellow," was the comment of the captain, as he handed the money back to the boy. "Take back the money. I'll see that the place is watched. If you go to the owner of the store in the morning, and tell him what you have just told me, I don't believe he will take a cent from you."

The little fellow dried his eyes, said "Thank you," and leaving his name and address, went to his home.

## THE LEGEND OF THE EASTER EGGS.

On the day of the crucifixion it happened that a sweet singing bird sat brooding upon her nest. It was built of mosses "green as malachite," and held within its walls four fair eggs that were whiter than purest ivory.

During the terrible convulsions through which the earth passed on that dreadful day the soul of the bird was filled with fear, but mother love was stronger than fear within her heart. As she pressed her eggs ever more closely against her breast, she determined that whatever befell they should be guarded even at the cost of her life.

The darkness came, the earth trembled, the rocks were rent, but through all those fearful sights and sounds the little bird sat silent and motionless, holding her small and tender body as a shield between her treasure and the unknown dangers which compassed her about.

At length the day was done, and evening fell. The bird trusted that the worst had passed. She looked at her eggs to make sure that they were safe, and settled herself for the long and, she hoped, quiet watches of the night.

You remember how Joseph of Arimathea obtained from Pilate the inestimable

privilege of caring for the body of our Saviour, which he wrapped in fair linen and laid in his own new tomb.

Now it so chanced that the sweet singing bird had chosen to build her nest deep in the green heart of a stately tree whose branches overhung this tomb. Awakened from her sleep, she looked forth and saw the body of our Lord lying close by the entrance of the tomb. When she beheld the pale, heavenly face, the dear hands and feet pierced by the cruel nails, her

A strange slumber dropped upon her, and, with head hidden in her breast, she slept as if she never would wake again. All day long she lay as still as if she was a dead bird, cradled in her nest; but deep in the watches of the night she woke once more, suddenly and fully, with senses sharpened and her being all alert.

She listened: the air was soundless. She looked: but a deep darkness which her eyes could not penetrate was over all. Motionless but vigilant, she waited for a

warmth, and joy, and sweet delight such as she had never known before, and again she broke forth in song. Raising her voice to its highest tones, she poured forth into the night a strain so sweet and wild, note upon note so filled with joy, that, soaring higher and ever higher, it climbed to the very gates of heaven, and melted all hearts that heard it.

The angel listened to this chant of joy which greeted the triumph of his risen Lord, and thought upon the sorrowing plaint of the night before. Turning to the bird, he said:

"Sweet bird, thou shalt be ever blest,  
Thyself, thy eggs, and thy moss  
wreathed nest."

And from that night the eggs of this wonderful sweet-singing bird change at the first glimmer of the dawn on Easter morning, to glow as jewels do, and thus they round the world—

"As best they may,  
Of the holy marvel of Easter Day"

## FEASTS IN JAPAN.

THESE are several annual feasts in Japan which bring with them much mirth and frolic. First among them is the Feast of the New Year, when father, mother, and all the older members of the family lay aside their work and dignity and join with the children in the fun. For about two weeks the festival lasts, and the festive spirit remains through the whole month.

From early morn till bedtime the children wear their prettiest clothes and play without rebuke. Guests come and go and bring pretty toys for the children. The tables are filled with good things to eat, of which *mochi*, or cake made from rice flour, is one of the most important. The children ride from house to house in *jisrikishas* with their parents to make New Year's visits. In the evening the whole family, including grandparents and servants, gather for merry games.

Scattered through the year are various flower festivals, when young and old visit the famous gardens, where the plum, cherry, iris, azalea, or chrysanthemum attain their greatest perfection, and spend the day out of doors.

Perhaps the most delightful feast of all the year is the "Feast of Dolls," when on the third day of the third month the great fireproof storehouse gives forth its treasure of dolls—in an old family, many of them hundreds of years old. For three days with all their tiny belongings they reign supreme. Some of the dolls represent the emperor and empress in old fashioned court dress. Near them are seated court musicians, each with his instrument. After those on lower shelves are placed dolls dressed like the common people.

Placed beside the dolls are all the things that dolls might be expected to require—trays, bowls, cups, buckets, each utensil holding its appropriate variety of food. The sake used is a sweet, white variety, differing from the ordinary *saki* as sweet cider does from hard cider. Besides the table service there are *pilankunas*, bullock carts, fire boxes with tongs and charcoal



EASTER LILIES.

heart nearly broke with sorrow, and she lifted up her voice in song whose like has never since been heard on earth.

Through all the long dark night her song kept on; a song wild and shrill, loud and long; now filled with tears; now with the echoes of despair; and now it was like the wailing moanings of a homeless wind that seeks and never finds. It was as if the grief of all the world had turned to song.

With the first faint glimmer of the dawn deep silence fell upon the earth. The vigil of the bird had ended; her song was stilled.

message which she felt would come. Presently the air began to stir; there was a sound of soft-beating wings; a dim lustre gently lifted the veil of darkness. The brightness grew apace, and soon a shining angel, clothed in white, alighted and stood before the rock within whose depths lay the martyred body of the Lord of earth and heaven. The great stone rolled away, and wrapped in a glory that seemed to fill all nature with its light, stood Christ, risen.

As the bird gazed, the glory poured into her heart, flooding her whole being with a